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Police K9 Center Graduates 19 Handlers of Drug-Detecting Dogs

Bolivia, Ecuador, and El Salvador now have 19 new handlers of drug-detecting dogs after they completed a demanding 90-day training course at the VIII International Dog Handler Course held in El Paso, Cochabamba.

The requirements to graduate as a dog handler include having strong traits that include empathy, loyalty, and affection for the dog as well as solid physical, ethical, and intellectual preparation. The handlers and their dogs face dangerous situations, long working hours, adverse environments, and should always be prepared for the unexpected.

The Canine Training Center, administered by the Bolivian Special Anti-Narcotics Police (FELCN) and funded by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL), also delivered awards to outstanding students and dogs who graduated with honors.

Six police officers from Ecuador and El Salvador will return to their countries accompanied by their dogs.

Donald Frerichs, director of the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs office in Bolivia said that in compliance with the Framework Agreement between the two countries and on the basis of the concept of shared responsibility, the United States funded the center activities with \$350,000 in 2012.

Frerichs praised the work of the handlers who "team up with their dogs and become a unique and powerful force in the fight against drugs." He said that during the training, one Ecuadorian handler and his dog found and seized two kilograms of drugs hidden in a suitcase at the Viru-Viru airport in Santa Cruz.